



NEWS RELEASE

HUNTSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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2013 Crime Stats Show Declines in Huntsville

Huntsville, Alabama (February 18, 2014) FBI crime statistics released this week show overall crime in Huntsville followed a national trend and decreased for the first six months of 2013. Huntsville statistics for the entire 2013 year show crime dropped in most major categories, including a 14 percent decline in robbery, 12 percent drop in burglary, and a reported decrease in rape in 2013. There were one percent drops in larceny, auto theft, and aggravated assault.

“Overall our crime statistics show we remain one of the safest cities in Alabama and in the country,” said Police Chief Lewis Morris. “It also shows that our Community Watch and public safety programs are making a difference in the vigilance of our citizens.” In addition to a drop in property crimes, police also worked to recover about 27 percent of stolen property and about 80 percent of stolen cars.

Chief Morris, however, says there is still work to do. Homicides were up last year, rising from twelve murders in 2012 to 25 in 2013. Police have successfully solved and made arrests in 80 percent of the cases and attribute the majority of the homicides to street level drug crime. Huntsville’s murder rate still remains well below other comparable cities, but Chief Morris says one homicide is one too many.

“The majority of the homicides are connected to a small network of known drug offenders, and we have been working to crack down on the dealers,” said Morris, who reported a 24 percent increase in drug arrests last year. He says a related statistic is the 73 percent increase in assault on police officers. “When you see an increase in officer assaults, in homicide, and then drug related arrests,” you get a pretty clear picture of where you need to focus your efforts,” said Chief Morris. “Our drug task force is working on the root cause of the problem, and that is the trafficker.”

HPD says citizens can help by calling the police department tip line with any information on suspected crime, particularly drug activity. Police credit the city’s highly active, 164 Community Watch organizations, as key eyes and ears in their respective neighborhoods. “It’s all about working together for a safer and better Huntsville,” said Chief Morris.